

## The Commoner.

every child. Surely Virginia, the home of Jefferson, will not be the first state to enter upon a restrictive policy which would condemn a portion of the people to enforced illiteracy.

### Is This Prosperity?

The Philadelphia North American in a recent issue gives a discouraging description of the depression which prevails in the textile trade. The facts and causes are condensed by it into the following brief statement:

Total number of textile employes in Phila...	75,000
Number at steady work.....	20,000
Number on "half" or "three-quarter" time...	35,000
Number idle.....	15,000
Number unaccounted for.....	5,000

#### CAUSES OF DEPRESSION.

1. Overproduction during prosperity.
2. Underconsumption due to low wages.
3. The war in China.
4. Competition of "substitute" commodities.
5. Change in styles.
6. Change in centres of textile industry.

If we had a low tariff the protectionists would recommend a high tariff as a remedy; if we had bimetallism the gold standard would be proposed as a panacea, but as we have a high tariff and a gold standard this depression will be explained as one of those natural and necessary conditions which cannot be prevented by foresight or remedied by legislation. It comes, too, at a time when the stock markets are booming and when the speculators are boasting that railroad stocks have gained more than five hundred millions in market value within a few months.

The North American gives interviews with employers and employees. Here is a sample from each side. John Hamilton, proprietor of Montgomery Carpet Mills, says:

"This thing is all a scare. The business is bad for some, and other manufacturers are running about the same as usual. We are running short-handed, but that is because it is the end of our season. The talk about people starving is only the vaporing of labor agitators. There is no necessity for people starving. If they can't find work in the textile trades, let them get to work at something else. I have no reason to offer for the 'depression,' because there is no depression."

Mr. Hamilton is not worried about the lack of employment or the lack of food complained of by some of the others. It is evident that his salary is still paid regularly.

Edward Thornton, business agent of the Allied Textile Trades is quoted as saying:

"The 'busy' season, so long expected, has not come. Since November there has been no season at all. In the upholstery trade not seventy-five per cent of the thirty-two mills are running on anything like full time. A weaver in this line of work could make \$13 a week, but now the most skillful barely average \$5 a week. The weavers can make a fair wage as long as there is work, but the periods of idleness are disastrous. There has been a great overproduction and a tendency to lower the quality of the goods manufactured. The tariff on wool has played havoc with the ingrain trade and has created a field for Japanese and Chinese matting. In fact, people are not buying carpets as they did at one time. As yet there have been few appeals for help, but this will come later if the depression continues. Our men are living on credit to a great extent, but this is bound to end."

The North American is a republican paper

and is owned by a son of ex-Postmaster General Wanamaker. Its portrayal of the industrial situation in one of the great trade centers will be profitable reading for those republicans who believe that universal prosperity is the constant and necessary attendant of a republican administration.

### Booth on Fine Clothes.

General William Booth of the Salvation Army discussing clothing in the War Cry says:

"But necessary and useful as the clothes-wearing habit may be, like all other things good and useful in themselves, it can be perverted, and made into an evil. This is just what has happened; and the material, shape, and general character of clothes have become sources of temptation—indeed, they can be counted as among the most fruitful causes of evil with which poor human nature has to battle.

For instance, clothes, more than all else, may be the means of fostering and feeding the pride and vanity of the human heart. Introduced on account of the sin of our first parents, and therefore to be regarded as marks of their disgrace, it is curious to contemplate the extent to which their posterity has come to glory in their shape.

It is not probable that when clothes became a necessity, it was intended that they should disfigure or be out of harmony with the human form. On the contrary, it is perfectly natural to suppose the opposite; but that they should be made to foster the vanity, occupy the time, and involve the extravagant expenditure that have come to be the usage in the present day, could hardly have been imagined. Oh, the waste and misery caused by the rage to be as finely dressed as, or to outdo, those about us!"

### Public Conscience Seared.

A London dispatch quotes Mr. Poultney Bigelow as indulging in some cruel criticism at the expense of the political situation in the United States. He recently delivered a course of lectures at Harvard University and upon landing in London gave out the following interview:

"Commercialism is running riot in the United States. The Yankees are coining their ideas and energies into money. The trust builders are doing the rest. These money kings necessarily exercise a blighting influence on the morals of public servants, they create all manner of temptations and breed all manner of jobbery.

"In Washington, I found cynical contempt for the constitution. Corruption stalks through the government. It disgraces the halls of congress, which are little more than a brokerage shop for the sale of authority to fleece the people. Legislators, department officials and petty public servants of all kinds neglect no opportunity to turn their official prerogatives to profit.

"I learned many specific instances of flagrant jobbery, especially in connection with the Philippine war. There are a thousand officials who owe it stealings ranging from very small to very large amounts. They don't want the struggle to come to an end. They would much prefer to see it indefinitely prolonged.

"Of course I shouldn't think of reflecting upon men like Messrs. Hay and Taft, but if Mr. Hay were the Angel Gabriel and Mr. Taft St. Peter come to earth they couldn't stop the complex, far-reaching system of thievery which prevails in the public service.

"President Hadley, I see, denies that he said that a continuance of present tendencies would land an emperor in Washington in twenty-five years. I don't see why he should desire to deny such a statement. We would better have an emperor—some one to take a firm stand against the rising tide of official immorality—than to have rulers who have no interest in the government beyond the outcome of the next election. I had rather

live under Emperor William than under the vicious tyranny of railway, oil and steel kings.

"America needs a thorough arousing of the public conscience. She needs to deliver her from the slavery of capitalism such men and women as delivered her from slavery of human beings. In other words, she needs an epidemic of cranks—cranks like Garrison, cranks like England had in Cobden and Bright."

According to Mr. Bigelow the party in power contains a large number of men who measure up to Mr. Watterson's definition of statesmanship, men who are able to detach their policies from their visions and to sever their official conduct from their moral principles. Mr. Bigelow is wrong in preferring an empire, but is correct in saying that the public conscience needs quickening. The most distressing feature of the present situation is that men who condemn immorality in individuals seem indifferent to corruption in high places and to the use of government for private gain.

### The Man With the Hoe.

By EDWIN MARKHAM,

(Written after seeing Millet's World Famous Painting.)

"God made man in His own image,  
in the image of God made He him.—Genesis

Bowed by the weight of centuries he leans  
Upon his hoe and gazes on the ground,  
The emptiness of ages in his face,  
And on his back the burden of the world.  
Who made him dead to rapture and despair,  
A thing that grieves not and that never hopes,  
Stolid and stunned, a brother to the ox?  
Who loosened and let down this brutal jaw?  
Whose was the hand that slanted back this brow?  
Whose breath blew out the light within this brain?  
Is this the Thing the Lord God made and gave  
To have dominion over sea and land;  
To trace the stars and search the heavens for  
power;  
To feel the passion of Eternity?  
Is this the dream He dreamed who shaped the suns  
And pillared the blue firmament with light?  
Down all the stretch of Hell to its last gulf  
There is no shape more terrible than this—  
More tongued with censure of the world's blind  
greed—  
More filled with signs and portents for the soul—  
More fraught with menace to the universe.

What gulfs between him and the seraphim!  
Slave of the wheel of labor, what to him  
Are Plato and the swing of Pleiades?  
What the long reaches of the peaks of song,  
The rift of dawn, the reddening of the rose?  
Through this dread shape the suffering ages look;  
Time's tragedy is in that aching stoop;  
Through this dread shape humanity betrayed,  
Plundered, profaned and disinherited,  
Cries protest to the Judges of the World,  
A protest that is also prophecy.

O masters, lords and rulers in all lands,  
Is this the handiwork you give to God,  
This monstrous thing distorted and soul-quenched?  
How will you ever straighten up this shape;  
Touch it again with immortality;  
Give back the upward looking and the light;  
Rebuild in it the music and the dream;  
Make right the immemorial infamies,  
Perfidious wrongs, immedicable woes?

O masters, lords and rulers in all lands,  
How will the Future reckon with this Man?  
How answer his brute question in that hour  
When whirlwinds and rebellion shake the world?  
How will it be with kingdoms and with kings—  
With those who shaped him to the thing he is—  
When this dumb Terror shall reply to God  
After the silence of the centuries?